

REMARKS

Claims 1-21, 23-29 and 31 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 2, 16 and 29 are amended. No new matter is added by these amendments.

Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action states that claims 17-21, 23-28 and 31 are allowed. Additionally, the Office Action states that claims 4, 5, 13 and 14 recite allowable subject matter. In the absence of any stated objections and/or rejections of claims 15 and 16, Applicants understand that these claims are allowed. Applicants appreciate this indication of allowability.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 6-12 and 29 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,537,188 to Haneda et al. (hereinafter "Haneda") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,414,493 to Fujii et al. (hereinafter "Fujii"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that neither Haneda nor Fujii teaches, or would have suggested, the feature "at least a portion of the developer storage space of the image forming section is arranged in an area which is surrounded by the inclination portion, a horizontal plane extended from the lower end of the inclination portion, and a vertical plane extended from the upper end of the inclination portion," as positively recited in the pending claims 1 and 15.

Instead, in Haneda, a part of a polygonal mirror 1131 is already disposed in the area as recited in the pending claims, *i.e.*, surrounded by the inclination portion, the horizontal plane and the vertical plane. Even if one skilled in the art is motivated to enlarge a black toner hopper 204H (developer storage box) in the upward direction, he/she would not modify Haneda so as to arrange at least a portion of the developer storage space occupied by the polygonal mirror.

Furthermore, neither Haneda nor Fujii teaches or suggests the feature that "the first developer storage portion and the second developer storage portion sandwiching therebetween a horizontal line which is extended from a latent image forming position of the image carrier" recited in claims 1 and 15. Instead, in Haneda, the horizontal line extended from the latent image forming position of the image carrier (tangential to the top of photoreceptor drum 100) is not between the member 204H (first developer storage position) and the member 204 (second developer storage position).

With respect to claims 2 and 16, the Office Action asserts that the applied references teach the features as recited in the pending claims. However, for the same reasons as discussed above, the applied references do not teach "the first developer storage portion and the second developer storage portion sandwiching therebetween a horizontal line which is extended from a latent image forming position of the image carrier" recited in claims 2 and 16.

Further, neither applied reference teaches "at least a portion of a wall surface which surrounds the developer storage space extends along the inclination portion," as positively recited in amended claims 2 and 16. Instead, both references teach that a wall surface which surrounds the developer storage space does not extend along the inclination portion.

Regarding claim 29, the applied references do not teach "the developer replenishment box is disposed in an upper position than a latent image writing position on the image carrying body," as positively recited in amended claim 29. Instead, the references teach that the developer replenishment box is located in a lower position on the image carrying body. For example, Haneda, as illustrated by Fig. 1, shows the replenishment box (204H) disposed adjacent to the image carrying body. With respect to the applied Fujii reference, the Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to use the teaching of Fujii, with the apparatus of Haneda, to form the black imaging box as large as the spacing

allows. Unfortunately, the black developer box is the lowest disposed box within the apparatus, and if the box were to be expanded it would expand downwards, away from the inclined ejection tray. As such, Haneda, in any permissible combination with Fujii, does not support a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to the subject matter of the pending claims.

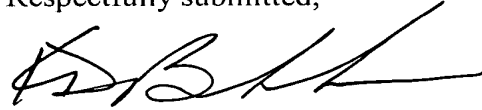
For at least the above reasons, Haneda and/or Fujii, cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combinations of all of the features recited in at least independent claims 1, 2 and 29. Further, claims 3 and 6-12 would also not have been suggested by the applied prior art references for at least the respective dependence of these claims on allowable independent claims 1 and 2, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-3, 6-12 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of applied prior art references are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-3, 6-12 and 29, in addition to the continued allowability of claims 4, 5, 13-21, 23-28 and 31 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: July 11, 2007

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